

Wildlife Hazard Management



The Wisconsin Pilot's Perspective

January, 2003

Deer hazards

Deer and other mammals pose an extreme hazard to aircraft due to their size and the possibility of a strike during the critical flight periods of takeoff and landing. Airports offer an excellent habitat for deer and the possibility for wildlife incursions is a potential threat at many Wisconsin airports. Deer are most active in the early morning and evening and pilots should take extra precaution during operations at these time periods.

Pilot actions

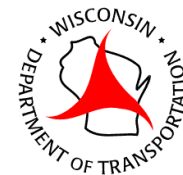
- Check NOTAMs and airport directories for information regarding deer activity. If unsure call ahead by telephone or unicom for deer advisories.
- Use landing lights during takeoff and landing.
- Make a low approach to determine if any deer are present. If necessary, have airport personnel, if available, disperse deer before landing.
- If deer are on the runway during the landing phase, go around and wait until they disperse.
- On takeoff, be ready to abort, if speed permits, or fly over any deer that enter the runway.
- Be especially vigilant during early morning or evening operations.
- Report all incidents or deer sightings on the airport to airport personnel.

Reporting wildlife strikes

The FAA has a standard form (FAA Form 5200-7) for the voluntary reporting of bird and other wildlife strikes with aircraft. To improve the ease of reporting, strikes can also be reported via the Internet at <http://wildlife.pr.erau.edu/strikeform/birdstrikeform.html>.

It is very important that strikes be reported by anyone who has knowledge of the strike. It is important to include as much information as possible on FAA Form 5200-7. The identification of the species of wildlife struck is particularly important. Bird strike remains that can not be identified can be identified by a local biologist or by sending feather remains in a sealed bag with FAA Form 5200-7 to:

Federal Aviation Administration
Office of Airport Safety and Standards
AAS-310
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20591



Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics
P.O. Box 7914
Madison, WI 53707-7914
(608) 266-3351
www.dot.wisconsin.gov

Wildlife strike statistics

Understanding when and where most wildlife strikes occur is important for the safety of aircraft pilots and passengers. The following information provides an overview of the nature and magnitude of the problem.

- From 1990 to 1998, 22,935 strikes (average of 2,548/year) were reported to the FAA.
- Birds were involved in 97% of the reported strikes with gulls, raptors, blackbirds, waterfowl and doves being the most common.
- Most bird strikes (50%) occurred in the four months between July and October.
- 66% of the bird strikes occurred during the day.
- 55% of bird strikes occurred when the aircraft was on approach or during the landing roll.
- 39% of bird strikes occurred during takeoff and climb.
- About 40% of bird strikes occurred when the aircraft was on the ground.
- 78% of all strikes occurred under 1,000' AGL.
- Mammals were involved in 3% of all wildlife strikes.
- The greatest percentage (31%) of mammal strikes occurred during October - November.
- 60% of mammal strikes occurred when the aircraft was on approach or landing.
- 34% of mammal strikes occurred during takeoff.
- 61% of mammal strikes occurred at night.

Bird hazards

Bird hazards have existed since the beginning of air travel and can cause a considerable amount of damage and occasional loss of human life. To reduce the number of bird strike occurrences, it is important for pilots to be aware of the possibility and seriousness of bird strikes. This brochure is to help pilots decrease the chance of a wildlife strike and to minimize the consequences if a strike occurs.



Pilot actions - preflight

- Check NOTAMs and airport directories for information about bird problems at departure and destination airports.
- Flight plan for as high an altitude as possible. Only 1% of general aviation bird strikes occurred above 2500' AGL.
- Avoid flying over bird sanctuaries, rivers or along coast lines, especially during the spring and fall migration periods.
- Preflight the aircraft carefully in the spring as birds can build a nest almost overnight. Any signs of grass, leaves or twigs should lead to further investigation.
- Listen to ATIS for warnings of bird activity and look for birds when taxiing. Report all unusual bird activity to air traffic control or flight service station.

Pilot actions - take off and in flight

- If birds are observed on the runway, have airport personnel, if available, disperse them before takeoff.
- If a bird strike occurs during the takeoff run and there is sufficient runway remaining, stop and check aircraft for damage.
- Use landing lights and strobe lights during takeoff, climb, descent, approach and landing to make the aircraft more visible.
- If the aircraft has windshield heating, its use will make the windshield more pliable and better able to withstand bird impact.
- If birds are seen, the slower the bird's wing-beat, the larger the bird and the greater damage in the event of a strike.
- Attempt to pass above any birds seen, as birds usually break-away downward when threatened.
- If the windshield is broken or cracked, slow the aircraft to reduce wind blast, follow procedures, use glasses and FLY THE AIRCRAFT.
- If dense bird concentrations are expected, avoid high speed descent and approach. Halving the speed results in a quarter of the impact energy.
- If flocks of birds are encountered during the approach, go around for a second approach because they may have cleared the area.